

Mogai Cybernetics

Behind the futuristic promise of a world of fully linked people and objects, when cars, fridges, watches, vacuums, and dildos are directly connected to each other and to the Internet, there is what is already here: the fact that the most polyvalent of sensors is already in operation: myself. "I" share my geolocation, my mood, my opinions, my account of what I saw today that was awesome or awesomely banal. I ran, so I immediately shared my route, my time, my performance numbers and their self-evaluation. I always post photos of my vacations, my evenings, my riots, my colleagues, of what I'm going to eat and who I'm going to fuck. I appear not to do much and yet I produce a steady stream of data. Whether I work or not, my everyday life, as a stock of information, remains fully valuable.

-The Invisible Committee - Fuck Off Google

Cybernetic power is the new formation of power under capitalism in the 21st century.

Cybernetic power functions digitally and in networks; cybernetic power is the management of power through networks, and the production of power in the creation and maintenance of connections between people, governments, and the institutions of capitalism and state.

Cybernetic power functions through the sorting, categorizing, culling and analyzing of information, it functions through the accumulation of data points in order to make projections. It is used to manage us. It is decision by (meta)data, information, the algorithm, and functions through the mapping of networks, but always with the goal of strengthening the present situation, the present social relations precisely by creating them again in ever more dynamically stable forms. A friend of mine works for the algorithm of postmates - she doesn't even have a boss to hate. While this conception of power is useful when talking about aspects of capitalism, and the state - we can see it in the NSA or in the production of value entirely in financial markets- it has utility beyond this; it has utility as an analytical tool in the realm of sexuality .

This is because cybernetic logic has increasingly come to be the way in which the politics of sexual minorities function. It has increasingly been replacing the confessional method of "coming out" that dominated gay politics since the 1970s. Coming out as a politics is based on the idea of revolutionary confession, where the revelation of details to the larger world gains

respect or makes formerly impersonal politics of heterosexism concrete. It was therefore a materialization of an abstract, homosexuality, into a person. But this was always a fleeting victory. To come out was not to establish an eternal truth about one's sexuality, but to only establish that sexuality provisionally, since one had to come out to each new person with which one was more than a stranger or acquaintance.

What changed from this politic to one that is based in cybernetics? The process of coming out has moved from confessional to informational and transient to eternal. The blame can be laid at the rise of the internet. Although the internet has been labeled the great democratizer and equalizer it has in fact brought about ever greater levels of specificity in identity. The internet actually does accomplish its mission, it democratizes and equalizes, but also deindividualizes in a way not possible before, since letters were usually signed with a real name, and at the least had a chain of postal centers one could track. The internet however, reduces one to a username, and one begins on any social site as the unadorned forum signature, the faceless avatar, the twitter egg, the greyed out silhouette of a person. It's fitting that we choose these images, because they represent a non-material person, one who has no identifying characteristics available at a glance, no existence outside of the packets of the internet. The individual who accesses these sites begins then as non-differentiable from any other user. This in turn leads to the opposite of the goal of the internet, as there is an attempt to recreate within the internet the actual material world. Facebook ties your profile to your "real" name, every tumblr has a list of identities, the description field on every twitter and instagram is creatively filled out.

The phenomenon I wish to talk about, MOGAI politics and cybernetic power, could only exist within a panopticon such as this, because when the material world falls away, one is left with only language and the repetition of language through eternity, to distinguish oneself from

others. Language however can never reconstitute material reality, because it only has reference to it. It merely builds the self as a set of severed limbs in place of the full body, which is a coherent whole grasped socially, while identity is grasped discursively.

This linguistic shift is what opens the terrain of sexual identity to cybernetic power. The repetition of provisional identity becomes, in a space where eternal identity is much more useful because it is written and appears alongside one's existence, the creation of ever more specific identity categories. The provisional nature of coming out, which was only accomplished until the next stranger asked after your presumed heterosexual partner, has been replaced with not only the creation of more categories, but the rigid policing of categories and the elimination of nuance. This allows cybernetic power to ever more conclusively sort people, especially since the bios of the users of social media sites are what feeds cybernetic capitalism by the selling of data to advertisers to use in their algorithms. What happened in decades with the "lgbt" market is going to happen much faster with MOGAI politics; they will be recuperated by cybernetic capitalism for sale.

The process through which this occurs is panopticonic. Foucault describes the panopticon as functioning through the separation of subjects into ever smaller parts, which have no overlap with others; this function is then internalized by the subject themselves and exercised on themselves as a sort of self-surveillance. Within the realm of the new sexual identity politics, this process has advanced to a frightening degree. Rather than allowing for nuance and opacity, the creation of new specificities reinforces categories from which it is impossible to escape, except by the creation of a new, more precise identity. Rather than allowing that two gay people might experience desire, their gendered existence, their social location or love in different ways that not seem to have many commonalities, MOGAI politics insists that these must be different things entirely. Instead of allowing for opacity, there must be

transparency over every method of desire. The end result of this is a constant surveillance of the ways that one experiences sexual desire, with the hope of further refinement of individual identity, the nailing down of all the modes in which one experiences oneself. In short, the creation in labels of a full person.

Capitalism functions by the opening up, and subsequent exploitation of terrain, in both the physical realm (this is why space colonization must be resisted) and in the online world. The opening up of new spaces of identity, while it might be good to feel the things these identities describe, also forestalls the collapse of capitalism. No freedom can be brought about by being able to buy a shirt with a rainbow anymore than a shirt with a more precise pride flag. To truly be able to experience ourselves as whole being, as complete individuals, requires something more than a simple proliferation of labels, it requires the vision to move beyond them, not as a simple transcendence but as an abolishment. Coming out and identifying as are both alienating in their own way. A true politics of sexual liberation means the abolishment of ourselves as a minority, and a resistance to the commodification of our movement to do so.